

## Leading from behind doesn't work

Written by Gadi Adelman

Tuesday, 16 December 2014 19:42

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With the current situation in the world, now more than ever, the debate on United States national security should be front and center. Thanks to Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), it is.

For the launch of CVA's 'Strength & Security Project,' the organization teamed up with The Weekly Standard, and on December 2nd, 2014 they jointly hosted a national security policy forum in Washington, D.C., entitled "What Should Modern American Foreign Policy Look Like?"

Regardless of which side of the aisle you're on, there is no denying that this administration's foreign policy and national security strategy has made America weaker. Not only here at home, but through the eyes of the rest of the world as well. From ISIS and the Ukraine to Iran, we are at a flash point like no other time in recent history.

Senator Ted Cruz, keynote speaker of the event, opened by explaining, "There are times that are points of crisis" throughout our history and that "today is another one of those times". He

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continued by expressing that, "There is a critical need, both at home and abroad, to restore America's leadership in the world."

Cruz emphatically stated that "Leading from behind doesn't work, and we are seeing the consequences when America recedes and hides from the mantle of leadership". He then asked the question, "What does reasserting American leadership in the world mean?" He went on to suggest three things we should focus on.

First, "we should be a clarion voice in the world for freedom. The first element of a new American leadership in foreign policy is rediscovering the voice of America to speak out for freedom."

"The second critical element," he continued, "is resolutely defending U.S. national security," explaining that the "singular failure of the Obama/Clinton foreign policy has been a failure to focus on the vital national security interests of the United States." Cruz correctly stated, "Our foreign policy should focus like a laser on the national security interests of the United States of America, and we should not shy away from defending those."

"The third and final thing we need to do," Cruz concluded, "is to stand with the men and women of the military." Pointing out that the Pentagon is about to have "the fourth Defense Secretary in six years," Cruz stated that not only "have we had three step down, two have written books on the unwillingness of this administration to defend our national security."

Cruz was followed by a brief but powerful statement by Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA), who received applause when he stated that "We need a foreign policy that stops sending aid to governments that want to kill us".

Bill Kristol, editor of the Weekly Standard, then moderated a panel of experts in both foreign policy and national security. The panel was comprised of Michael E. O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, James Carafano, Vice President of Foreign & Defense Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation, and William Ruger, Vice President of Research and Policy at the Charles Koch Institute.

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[Watch the event here.](#)

The panel answered a broad range of questions from “What would you say to the next President?” to “How do we deal with terrorism?” Pete Hegseth, CEO of CVA posed the question, “Do you believe we lost or won the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?”

The insight, knowledge, and range of answers of these three individuals is a must see, and I have to admit that I found myself pondering both the questions and their answers.

CVA brought the failures of the Veterans Administration to the forefront, and what's more, they are leading the fight in making changes happen for the better. CVA is out there bringing what needs to be done front and center, and their new ‘Strength and Security Project’ is bound to be yet another successful endeavor.

There is no doubt that Cruz is right when he says “leading from behind doesn't work,” and when it comes to the needs and concerns of the men and women of our military, both those who currently serve as well as our veterans, Pete Hegseth and CVA are out in front leading the way.